

CASTINE.



BY EDWARD EDGEVILLE.

Southern Field and Fireside Novelle No 2 -- New Series.

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CASTINE.

CHAPTER I.

“This is indeed a *golgotha*—a place of skulls—a bed of dead men’s bleaching bones—a rock whereon many a ship of human life has been wrecked—the gulf that has swallowed up hopes as bright as my own fond dreams were five years ago. I wonder how these men looked when these skulls were animate with thought and speech and sight. Savage must be the hand that has torn them from their rude resting places and mounted them upon these dead stumps—dead as the human trunks which bore them in all the vigor and pride of manhood once. But the cruel foe has been here—and here is no deed too vile for his doing. The foe! Is it not strange that men, immortal, civilized, refined, should be not only the worst foes to themselves, but the worst foes to their brothers. Yet what comes of this philosophy—my own heart is as bitter as gaul—my whole being is absorbed by the worst of demonic desires, *revenge!* For five long and painfully fruitless years I have hunted him. Through cities, over railroads, lakes, seas, oceans, countries, islands, continents, everywhere I have tracked, but no where found him. I know his rank, I know his regiment, and while I watch at this ghastly post to-night, with yonder serene and silvery moon shining brightly down upon these armies—living and dead—that lie asleep around me, there is a something that whispers to my burning soul, “to-morrow—to-morrow, and thy sister’s wrong shall be avenged!” Ah! Lester, Lester, let the morning’s lurid dawn find thee not asleep, but let its balmy zephyrs, well laden, waft thy earnest prayers to Heaven, for the destiny of thy wicked soul is near at hand.

Jennie, my dear, sweet angel sister, the villainous brute that sent thee mercilessly to thy untimely grave shall soon lie as low, stark and cold as thee."

Captain Waterfield, in his capacity of Aid-de-Camp had spent a busy night after a long and tiresome march on the 29th of July, 1862. The brigade to which he was attached had reached the old battle ground of Manassas. The weary armies in position for the morrow's death-work were sleeping as soundly as if no raven drooped its shadowy pall above them. Here and there a guardian picket watched the twinkling of the stars and listened for the cracking of the brush near him, or the lumber of the enemy's artillery taking position in the distance. It was about three o'clock in the morning when Capt. Waterfield dismounted and threw himself upon the ground to snatch a few minutes sleep. Thoughts of the coming day and its probable events crowded upon his mind so thick and fast, however, that slumber was driven from him. He lay thinking and listening. Footsteps! Yes, he heard footsteps near him. Some one, probably of his brigade, was availing himself of the bright moonlight to look after some well remembered locality in which he had been one year before. The footsteps ceased—the soldier paused, and Capt. Waterfield lay still and listened at the soliloquy given above.

As the speaker ceased, Capt. W. rose and approached him; and to his surprise found Sergeant Walter Larksly leaning meditatively upon his musket in the midst of the golgotha he had heard him describe in his soliloquy.

Walter Larksly was a youth of about nineteen summers, delicate in frame and effeminate in features, with a head of full, long fine, cold black hair, and large black "talking eyes." Notwithstanding that Shakespeare reckoned not upon "an effeminate man in time of action," Sergeant Walter, as he was familiarly called by his comrades and officers, had proven upon more occasions than one, that he

was brave as well as handsome, gallant as well as neat and tidy in his dress. He came to the regiment a recruit, hailing from Tennessee, soon after the regiment had taken the field in the outbreak of the war. His good conduct under fire, in camp, on the march, and upon all occasions, coupled with his exceedingly modest and unassuming deportment, soon secured for him the esteem and confidence of all who knew him, as well as the tender of various promotions. Of the latter he persistently refused anything higher than a Sergeantry. He said he would not accept any position which would take him from the ranks and his musket.

Sergeant Walter was a favorite of Capt. Waterfield's. The Captain approached Walter, saying, kindly:

"I beg pardon, Sergeant, for intruding, which I would not have done had you not so greatly excited my curiosity by that strange soliloquy which you spoke so loud that I could not help hearing it, as I lay just in the bushes there trying to sleep."

"I thought, Captain," replied Walter, "that these dead men's heads were my only companions. I fear that this horrid association has made me think and talk wildly and rudely."

"O, not rudely Walter, but I must confess, your language did sound wild to me. But come, Walter, my dear boy, to tell you the truth, I believe that I have unwittingly read a page of your heart-history that is not known to many. Fear not, it shall be sacred—I shall never repeat it."

"You are a good man, Captain. You are very kind to me."

"But, Walter, will you pardon me, as I asked you Jennie that you spoke of. Jennie's name was the only name all names to me. Many years, with many a blighting storm, have swept over my life-bark, yet there is one memory always fresh and dear, and I call that memory Jennie."

“ Ah ! Captain you will run me mad. Do not talk to me of Jennie. The name may be sweet to you—but it is both nectar and wormwood to me.”

“ Why, Walter, is it possible that one so young should feel so much ?”

“ Sit down upon this log, Captain ; listen and I will tell you of *my* Jennie. She was my dear sweet sister. We were orphans. She was to me both a sister and a mother. We lived with an uncle in Tennessee. We were poor, Sister Jennie and I. She was a good, patient, affectionate girl ; I was wild, restless, unsatisfied in my nature. Yet we were not unhappy. A tall, handsome man, with light hair and blue eyes, very much like yours, Captain, came and loved and wooed Jennie. They were to be married. Another came—a lord of wealth and fashion, with black glossy hair and sparkling black eyes. He wooed fondly and earnestly—talked of his elegant establishment in a neighboring village, his fine horses and splendid drives, but Jennie declined his offer. He would not hear her refusal, and persisted in his attentions to the mutual annoyance of Jennie and her betrothed. He came one evening and took her riding, and alas ! poor Jennie never returned. Scandal-mongers glutted the market with a tale of love and wrong, but Jennie was dead. In a moment of desperate frenzy the wretch had taken her life because he could not win her love from its sacred pledge to another. He concealed her body by a hasty burial in the dense forest, and fled the country. All the ardor of my youthful soul, all the strength of my boyish frame, all the recklessness of my desperate spirit, all the fire of my ardent affection for my sister, all the unshaped destinies of my opening life, concentrated in that one word, *revenge*. I was but a boy, fourteen years of age, but I paused not. I crowded my scanty wardrobe in a carpet bag, and while my uncle and aunt lay asleep at night I bid the kind home they had given me farewell. I left it with the terrible

oath upon my lips that I would never return to it, that I would never tire or cease in my purpose, until the villain should pay, with interest, into my hands, for the life he had taken. If "home is not home without a mother" what was my home to me—I had neither mother, sister, brother or father. I felt that I could lie down in the beds with the wild beasts of the forest and find them as warm and comfortable as the cold charities of the world. On that dark and dreary night, five years ago, I started on my search after my sister's murderer, and from that hour to this I have hunted him with a hot trail. And to-night, Captain, something of an inexplicable intuition, or the guardian spirit of Jennie, tells me that to-morrow I shall catch the game—to-morrow this suffocating load that I have carried within my heart so long shall be lightened."

"Who, Walter, who are you," asked Captain Waterfield, trembling with emotion and greatly agitated, nervously grasping Walter's arm and jerking him suddenly around so that he could look square into his boyish face. He looked at him scrutinizingly and wonderingly for a minute or more in dead silence. Loosening his hold he continued, "there is a mystery here, boy, a strange link in the chain of human affairs that I must learn more of. This tale of yours seems but an echo from the murmur of the memory-billows that beat and roll with a ceaseless and pitiless fury upon the barren rock within my own bosom. I must compare the sounds again, but not now, it is day, and there!—the enemy has opened upon our left. Good-bye, Walter, I must to my duties."

"Good-bye, Captain—and I to my revenge!"

CHAPTER II.

Capt. Waterfield mounted his horse and dashed up to his brigade head quarters and joined his General. The brigade was soon formed and ordered forward; Sergeant Walter having been duly relieved and ordered in, moved with his command towards "the flashing of the guns." The brigade moved up handsomely within musket range of the enemy and delivered a withering opening volley. Then commenced on that part of the line a terrible and unremitting rattle of musketry and thunder of artillery that made the rocky hill-sides shake and the tree-tops tremble with the "music in the air." Suddenly and unexpectedly the enemy opened a heavy battery from a knoll upon the right flank. Quick, it seemed almost as thought, the brigade changed front and with a shout and a yell rushed like a torrent of fury up to the guns of the enemy, who received it with a perfect sheet of flame and death. It seemed impossible to advance—it would have been certain destruction to retreat. The brigade wavered—its gallant commander had fallen wounded. With a soul full of fearless heroism and daring patriotism, Sergeant Walter rushed forward with a forlorn hope—his company, then his regiment and then his brigade followed and the enemy's line was carried and the battery captured, together with the most of its supports of two brigades.

"Ah!" cried Sergeant Walter, clubbing his musket as he bounded over the works and rushed upon a tall, dark complected Yankee Captain, "you are my man—*my* hour has come at last—henceforth light lie the cloud on Mirkiana Inawa and heavy lie thy sins upon thy guilty soul."

"I beg for mercy, sir," said the Yankee Captain, dropping humbly upon his knees, "I am a soldier under the United States flag—and entitled to be treated as a prisoner of war—and know nothing of Mirkland Lawn."

"You die!—you base, cowardly wretch; you know nothing of Mirkland Lawn (!) you have forgotten Jennie Bates (!) whom you murdered because she would not marry you—you have forgotten Castine (!) you have forgotten the happy home that you made miserable—but I have not forgotten you. I know you Richard Lester—*Captain* Richard Lester, and those who know you now among men shall shortly know you no more forever."

"You will not take my life—I have surrendered—"

"Talk not to me of surrenders, but tell me where is Jennie and say your prayers—be quick."

"But I pray you, sir, tell me who you are and what you mean?"

"I am Jennie's sister—I am a woman in soldier's attire and—"

"Castine?"

"Yes, I am Castine—a little girl of fourteen when last I saw you—from that day to this I have hunted you and now your life will but poorly avenge dear Jennie's death."

"She is not dead."

"Then tell me quick, where is she?"

"At 763 — street, New York City She is my wife."

"You Villian——"

"Hold!" cried a voice near by as a strong hand grasped Castine's arm and stayed the knife that tumbled with eagerness to sink into Lester's breast. Captain Waterfield had been standing near and overheard the conversation that revealed Sergeant Walter's character and sex, and he had thus interposed a timely interference to save Castine's excited hands from the crime of murder. Placing himself in front of Castine, he continued:

“Is it possible, Sergeant Walter—Castine—the sister of Jennie—Castine, the bright-eyed happy girl that I knew five years ago at Mirkland Lawn.”

“And are you Captain,” said Castine, “the same William Waterfield that gave me that beautiful little ring with clasped hands upon it?”

“The same.”

“And there,” said Castine, extending her hand, palm down, “is the same ring. You will find engraved inside as when you gave it me, the name, *Castine*.”

“But let us take care of our prisoner,” said Capt. W., “most of the prisoners are already on their way to the rear and our brigade has advanced and left us.”

A guard was hunted up to take Lester and start with him to join his companions already *en route* for the “Libby.” They had hardly gotten out of sight, and Captain Waterfield and Castine, (the latter of necessity still retaining her character as Sergeant Walter,) had but started towards the front when a brigade of the enemy emerged from a woods near by and in spite of their efforts to escape, both were taken prisoners.

CHAPTER III.

Sergeant Walter, for as such we must know Castine yet awhile, and Captain Waterfield, in due course of time, after a weary march, arrived at a receiving prison in Washington city. The day was just breaking as they reached the city. They were accompanied by about two hundred other prisoners and a heavy guard. Arriving at a large old brick stuccoed building, a pause of half an hour or more was made in the street near the doorway, which time was spent by the prisoners in the most comfortable positions they could place themselves upon door steps, curbstones and sidewalk. Sergeant Walter and Captain Waterfield rarely separated, for now Captain Waterfield felt that the great task before him was to manage the escape of Walter so that the real and true character of Castine could be at once resumed. But a woman's wit rarely fails her in an emergency where sagacity or quick consummation of plans will assist or relieve her; and while waiting near the prison door Walter fell into a whispered conversation with an Irishman belonging to the same company as Walter. Patrick O'Conner, true to his native instincts, was a personification of loyalty to his cause—and an ever ready and trusty soldier, and withal had traveled and read considerable and was quite intelligent. Walter felt that O'Conner could be trusted, so he said to him familiarly:

“Patrick, do you want any money?”

“Yees, sir; and aint ye talkin' right now!”

“ But hear me, Patrick. Through a friend I sold, just previous to joining our regiment a little tract of land, a portion of that left me by my uncle, in Tennessee. From the amount realized, I have drawn as I have needed. When we were captured yesterday, I had upon my person \$1,000 in gold—an amount that I always carry in order to meet any probable emergency that might arise.”

“ A thoughtful lad and a luckier one than I, ye are, sarg’ant,” said Patrick interrupting Walter.

“ But be patient,” continued Walter. “ Of this amount I will pay you one-half to assist me in making my escape from this prison and this city.”

“ Be out! with your five hundred dollars; and do ye think I would be ather taken’ a cint from ye for performin’ me duty to my country and sich a lad of a soldier as yerself.”

“ But will you help me?”

“ Will a dog snatch a bone?”

“ Mind you now, and do as I tell you, and this house that now threatens us with such gloomy grandeur will not be our abidin’ place eighteen hours. First take that money and bribe a sentinal—you know a Yankee will sell his conscience and his country both for gold—and instruct him to deliver to you by three o’clock this afternoon two fine black suits for gentlemen and one lady’s dress, skirts, bonnet, gloves, congress gaiters. Mind you these outfits must be neat, tasty and complete in every respect, for which you will pay him double their cost in gold; and remember ev’rything must be delivered by three o’clock this evening.”

“ And aye, sarg’ant who’re ye goin’ to make gentlemen of and where’s the lady comin’ from?”

“ You and Captain Waterfield shall be the gentlemen, Patrick, and you know I am stout and as my beard has not ye made its appearance, and my hair is pretty long, I can play the lady.”

"By the holy virgin what a fine little lady ye'll make."

"But do as I tell you Patrick, and fail not."

"By me faith, Miss Walter, its done already—or bad luck attend me beyond pergatory if it sha'nt be done."

"Then you have no time to losé."

"But I must wait sure till this guard's relaved."

"Then here comes the relief new."

"Not another word, Sarg'ant. Good luck upon your cunning head."

Walter turned from Patrick and approaching Captain Waterfield gave him a hasty report of what had been done.

"But," said Captain Waterfield, "Walter—Castine, I want to call you, for I love the name for the racmories it revives, and I love the person for her nobility of soul, dauntlessness of spirit and sublime heroism—have you thought that your whole scheme turns upon one very uncertain chance."

"I have measured the distance Captain, and I will make the march."

"For your own sake I pray you may succeed."

While this conversation continued between Walter and Captain W. Patrick was not idle. The new guard was put on and he scanned each one of their faces closely. Finally he selected a man who looked like he might have been, in days when Yankee drafts were unknown, a New York auctioneer of the Peter Funk order. He approached him and said

"Me friend, and ye look like ye might be me friend, how are ye off for greenbacks?"

"We'll I can't say that I'm flush."

"With just sich men as yourself to stand guard over me it strikes me I'm to remain here a long time."

"And I guess you're about right," replied Yankee.

"Hince I must have some clothes, a pipe or two and one swate glass of whiskey. Kape your eye upon me as

we inter that door and upon the next relafe you come to me and fifty dollars shall be your own upon the spot."

"Do you mean it?"

"Do I mane it! And what in the devil do you think I'm talkin' for!"

"Very well, I'll come—"

And just here the door of the building was opened and the crowd of prisoners commenced moving in. Pat's quick eye caught the sight of a large hogshead in the broad old hall that had been used for a coal deposit, and turning to the Yankee sentinel he had selected for his work who followed near at hand in order to "kape an eye" upon him as per agreement, he said, "mate me at the big black barrel."

"O K.," said Yankee with the money fever getting higher upon him.

The prisoners were allowed free access through the rooms upon whatever floor they were assigned. Pat lingered near the "big barrel."

At the appointed time the Yankee came, having passed the guard with a forged permit from the commandant of the prison which directed that the "bearer, special messenger," &c., be admitted to the prison for specified purposes.

Pat met him at the hogshead and said, "into the big barrel with ye or bad luck be upon ye."

"Hold on," said Yankee, "you are too rank—be careful. Let us lean upon it a minute, then sit upon it and then slip in."

"Me faith on your cunning," said Pat as he threw himself lazily against the hogshead.

The Yankee's suggestion was observed and in a few minutes they were both head and ears out of sight in the hogshead.

"Now," said Patrick, as they both squeezed themselves down into the bottom of the hogshead, "there is no time

to be wasted, so what'll ye take for the dirty slip of paper that brought ye in here?"

"But," replied Yankee, "how am I to get out again?"

"And never ye mind about that—I will return it to ye by three o'clock this afternoon."

"What surety have I that you will return it at all?"

"The best surety in the world, by me faith—gold. Here is twenty-five dollars, and—"

"But," interrupted Yankee, "that will not do."

"Well, I will leave fifty dollars with ye—forty of which you will return to me own hands when I replace your pass at three o'clock."

"Say two and a half o'clock, as I must go on guard again at three."

"Good! the bargain's made, provided you will now exchange outer garments with me so that I can go and come without having your own oath of allegiance poked at me around all the strate corners."

Yankee accepted the proposition in full, and soon they emerged from the coal hogshead dusty and dark with the powdered coal. Patrick presented his pass and his bluey arrayed person to the sentinel at the door-way, and was allowed a ready egress. Yankee played substitute with a bridled tongue.

Patrick O'Conner made a hasty and tasteful use of barber and clothier, and in an hour his own mother, to use his words, "would not have known Pathrick O'Conner."

Taking a hack with two large new boxes, each of which were marked "*provisions—perishable*," he drove back to the prison. In the meantime he had effected a new bribe in the highways of Washington, sufficient to have secured permits, properly and genuinely signed and approved, for "himself, sister and brother to travel anywhere within the limits of the United States," and with a special permit for each separately, to "visit the Old Capital Mili-

tary prison with the privilege of taking two boxes of provisions to friends."

Thus armed and equipped, Patrick presented the special permit for himself and "provisions" to the sentinel at the prison door, and was permitted to enter amid the handsomest military courtesies.

These boxes were conveyed to Sergeant Walter and Captain Waterfield; each containing outfits as Walter had directed, and one of them contained the Yankee's uniform also, of which Patrick had divested himself at the clothier's where he had belacked himself in all the latest New York and Parisian fashions. The boxes were unpacked in a small room in the presence of Captain Waterfield and Walter—Patrick took the Yankee his uniform to the hogshead; he found the Yankee in waiting, and though Yankee did not recognize Patrick, in consequence of the change from a "ragged rebel" to a fashionably shaved and dressed gentleman, Patrick insisted upon the redemption of his money with the little old crumpled paper which he had obtained from the Yankee as a pass. The business was at last ended with the Yankee, and he was allowed to re-pass and resume his duties as a guard.

As Patrick entered the room of Sergeant Walter and Captain Waterfield, their surprise need hardly be told at beholding a Pennsylvania avenue dandy made out of Patrick O'Conner.

After being repeatedly assured by Patrick that "he was Patrick O'Conner himself," Castine said:

"Why Patrick, you did not do as I told you. Did I not request you to bribe a Yankee to make these purchases, and—"

"And do you think," replied Patrick, "that he could have made more ilegant selections, or that I was going to miss a chance where I might be afther putting myself out—the divil trust a Yankee."

"And," argued Walter, "we are all now in danger

of our necks, because you did not make the one you engaged an active partner in our enterprise—his interest was merely passive, and now he will betray us all.”

“Betray us!” cried Patrick, “and wouldn’t I like to see him do it. Be ye not un’asy—I’ve s’aled his mouth.”

“But I am uneasy—we are certainly in danger.”

“I will be responsible, Sarg’ant. Fix yerself like a lady while I go and keep an eye upon the manœuvres of the sintinel who traded clothes with me; and then you must advance at my signal.”

In about half an hour Capt. Waterfield was arrayed as a “reliable gentleman from Washington city,” and presented in fact a graceful and dignified figure and, in an elegant suit of black, looked like anything else than a “rebel prisoner.” It was well for him that men are so easily deceived by the external appearance of their fellow men.

In Serg’t Walter the change effected by a careful toilet and from male to female attire was so great and so perfect that even Capt. Waterfield, who alone was in her secret, would not have recognized her had he met her abroad in the world—upon the streets of the city. Her long black hair was tastefully dressed down beside her forehead and ears, much or nearly all of the smoke of battle and the bronze of wind and sunshine had disappeared from her smooth face beneath some magical charm, her small hands looked well in a neat glove, and when the bonnet and scarf were on Sergt. Walter became Sergt. Walter no longer, but CASTINE in appearance as well as in spirit and in fact.

Patrick, or rather Mr. O’Conner it was now, Mr. Waterfield and Miss Castine Bates convened boldly in the open hall and held a “council of war.”

Patrick assured them that he had well arranged everything for their escape, in proof of which he produced writ-

ten evidence in the form of the passports he had secured from the War Department.

He presented the one for Castine to her, the one for Waterfield to him, all of which were of course made for assumed names, but which is best should not be made public. As Patrick had succeeded well in his labors so far, he was deputed as spokesman for the great ordeal which lay now near before them in attempting to complete their escape:

Taking Waterfield's arm Castine pulled her veil over her face, and, accompanied by Patrick, they advanced boldly to the sentinel at the door.

The sentinel was quite ready to permit Patrick to pass out; but he said he did not recollect that he had admitted the lady and other gentleman.

A cold shudder passed over Castine as she leaned upon the arm of Capt. Waterfield. She apprehended that the Yankee employed and already paid had betrayed them—rather had told all that he knew, although he did in fact know nothing of their designs, for Patrick had out-witted him so handsomely that for once a shrewd Yankee had been thoroughly hoodwinked. Yet Castine almost trembled for fear he had caught an insight into their plans.

The sentinel paused and reflected, stammered and hesitated, but at last, after a careful and minute examination of the passes of official authority which they presented, he begged pardon for detaining them, “ guessed,” with Patrick, that they were admitted to the building before he went on post, and allowed them to pass out—*out* into the street—out, “ to go wherever they wished in the limits of the United States.”

CHAPTER IV

As the party passed down the street Castine could not refrain from saying in a low tone :

“ Oh, Captain, what unspeakable pleasure there is in breathing the fresh air of heaven when we compare it to the impure atmosphere upon which we seemed destined to live for some months to come in the pent up walls of a prison. Thank God! we are free—free as we can be in this despotic country. And now we must lose no time—or at least *I*—must proceed to New York without delay, and I will know before I rest what truth there is in that villian Lester’s statement when he told me that Jennie—my loved and long-lost sister—still lives and at—there! I have forgotten the number.”

“ But I have not,” replied Capt. W., “ and I will pull the bell at 763, — street, New York, within forty-eight hours. But, alas! Castine, there is something that whispers to my heart that she is in fact—in law—if not in love—*his wife*. She is lost to me—I hope that you may yet be happy with her. Time has not lightened, but has pressed down and shaken together, the measure of sorrow that her mysterious fate meted out to me. The world, Castine, looks on at the myriad of heart malestoms around them, and, like a child in a dream, smiles at the vapory mist of desolation as it rolls its weeping shadows to the skies.”

“ True, true, Captain. But let us pursue with unfaltering steps the line of destiny that outstretches itself before us, be its windings and course ever so vague or un-

certain. Until Jennie has been found or her fate avenged, there is but one plain chart of action for me. Nothing shall daunt or sway me in my purpose."

"Then, Castine, when the secret is unveiled—when the truth shall be known—we must let it, be it good or bad, make no deeper the wound within our hearts—we have suffered, let us be strong."

Capt. Waterfield turned to Patrick and said:

"Patrick, will you go with us to New York, or will you proceed at once to return to Dixie?"

"And by me faith, Captain, I would be pleased to be with me comrades, but it is not Patrick O'Conner that is going to desert ye in an enemy's country. I will go with ye and our Sarg'ant lady."

Accordingly the party hastened to New York. They arrived there at seven in the evening and took quarters at the St. Nicholas hotel. Being greatly fatigued by their dusty and exceedingly uncomfortable travel Castine bade Capt. W. and Patrick good night soon after supper and retired. Capt. W. and Patrick walked down in front of the hotel where they continued in conversation until they had consumed two good havana cigars apiece, when they also retired. Entering their chamber and carefully locking the door, they whispered over an outline of their plans for the morrow. Bouyed by hope or stung by something akin to despair—as the hidden flame of a long, long lost love flickered in its heart-socket—Capt. Waterfield could not sleep.

Patrick said he was afraid the walls might have ears and preferred to spend the night in sleeping rather than in talking.

"One more request, Patrick," said Capt. W., "and I will not interrupt your drowsiness again. I feel, Patrick, as if I were this moment standing upon the very verge of my doom. With you I have faced death a thousand times,

but never has my spirit shrunk back from the task of duty, however bloody it has been, like it shrinks back now from an unknown something that lies before me—a terrible something, I know not what; with which I must meet and earnestly contend with the utmost might of both body and soul. I feel it, I know it—it is coming—and therefore I request that you will remain constantly with me. It *may* be death—and the monster makes cowards of us all—but if it should be, promise me that you will be a brother to our Sergeant whom we call Castine, until you are both back among the noble people of the South, and if—*if*—you should find *Jennie*, the sister of Castine, tell her that I have been true to her. Tell her how much I have loved her, silently but true for five long years. Tell her, even if it be in the presence of her husband, Lester, how my memory has painted and re-painted a myriad of times the outlines of her beautiful form; the round plumb arms that tapered down to the sweetest hand that ever electrified man by a touch of his brawny fingers; the soft, fond eyes that always seemed to swim in a rifeless sea of heavenly love; the lips that would fret the richest rubies fresh from their ocean cradles, into envy; those velvety cheeks whose flush through ivory-tinted skin would shame to death the first red-damasked rose of spring-time, even while it blushed forth its softest hues through the sparkle of the morning dew from a lilaceous bed. Tell her that my desolate life has been but an outrage of the purpose of Heaven when it created our souls for each other—though the law has given her to another, God has given her to me—I am hers—she is mine. There is in spite of us a divinity that creates, reveals and blends the congeniality of souls into a resistless fellowship which begins wherever and whenever the two beings meet and ends—NEVER!”

“Listen! listen! Captain,” said Patrick, interrupting, “and do ye hear that—the bells—the fire—Castine—and

by the holy Virgin we shall be burnt to dith before we can say a snatch of a prayer."

And out sprang Patrick and Capt. Waterfield into the floor. Looking out at their front window they saw the fire a little distance up town.

Castine had also been aroused by the bells, and never having seen a fire in a city, the leaping and shooting up of the huge flames excited her so that she was soon dressed, and she sent a servant to the room of Capt. W and Patrick to know if they were going to the fire, and asking if there would be any impropriety in her going. Capt. Waterfield and Patrick were just ready, and met her at her door, and with hurried steps they all started to the fire.

The fire was in a large, magnificent block of brick and granite residences—the mansions probably of merchant princes. It was early in the night—not more than ten o'clock.

Our trio—Capt. Waterfield Castine and Patrick—wended their way eagerly through crowds of people—ladies and gentlemen—that elbowed and jostled each other as they drifted on with the current of excitement, the little boys dodged hither and thither hallowing "fire! fire!" to the utmost capacity of their vocal powers, while the brazen bells changled and jangled out of tune in a clamorous appealing "to the mercy of the fi e."

Yet these stirring scenes did not remove from the minds of Castine and Capt. Waterfield their thought of Jennie and the morrow. Turning a corner which brought them near and upon the same street with the merciless element that roared and crackled and lapped its luried tongue high in the heavens, Capt. W enquired of a stranger the name of the street and was politely informed.

"The same street," said Jennie to the Captain, "that Lester said Jennie lives upon. Oh! suppose this fire should be near her home."

“I trust not,” replied the Captain, “but it is *possible*—let us hasten to the scene and I will make enquiries about the occupants of the neighboring buildings.”

They were soon at the place, and turning to a gentleman at his side, Capt. Waterfield asked,

“Who lives in that fine stone building adjoining the north side of the one on fire?”

“Mr. Richardson,” was the reply

“Who in the one on the south side?”

“Mr. Ansell.”

“Pardon my inquisitiveness,” said the Captain, “but be pleased to answer me what I should have asked first,—who are the unfortunate occupants of the building now on fire?”

“Captain Lester’s family”

“My God!” said Castine aloud, almost turning Capt. Waterfield around as she gave his arm a quick excited jerk, “it is Jennie’s—Jennie’s home.”

“Captain *Richard* Lester?” inquired Capt. W again turning to his polite informant.

“Yes, I believe that is his name.”

Castine could not refrain from promptly asking, in anxious tones that betrayed great feeling,

“Have the family made their escape from the building?”

“I am told that they have not—in fact there goes a ladder to one of the third story windows now; the stairway has been on fire several minutes, and the lives of the inmates are now dependent upon the prompt efforts of those brave firemen.”

“Take care of Castine, Patrick,” said Capt. Waterfield as he rushed through the crowd to the foot of the ladder.

The fire had began to break through several windows of the second story of the building, and the hope of saving the wife that was said to be within the building grew weak.

Approaching the firemen, who were holding a momentary consultation at the foot of the ladder, Capt. Waterfield said :

“Is there not a greater chance of saving the life of that poor woman than there is of losing the life of him who attempts the rescue?”

“It is exceedingly doubtful,” replied a voice from the group.

“If you will hold the ladder I will risk the attempt,” said Capt. W. as he sprang upon the lower rounds.

“It shall be safe at the bottom, but the danger is that the fire from the windows of the second story may burn it in two before you can find the woman and descend ; but if you will go, be quick.”

And up he went. While about midway the ladder the fire from a window near by leaped out and enveloped the daring man in its hissing flame—for a moment he was lost to view; and the hearts of thousands who gazed anxiously on stood still with a horrible dread. But he moved upwards—the fire did not seem to weaken his strength or slacken his efforts, and in a minute more he disappeared from view through a window of the building. He had entered what seemed to have been once designed as a nursery, but everything in it seemed so neat and trim and occupying its proper place that he concluded it was never occupied, and that it was not there he should find the object of his search, and hurried to open a door through the partition on his right, and passed into a chamber. The bed was smooth and white—in the centre of the room stood a centre table, upon it lay an open bible—beside the stand stood a lounge and upon this lounge lay a woman as still and pale as death. These things and this situation were observed by Capt. Waterfield as the fitful glare of the bounding fire fell upon them. There was no time to be lost—the floor upon which he stood was already hot and in a few minutes more the fire would certainly break

through. Yet he paused, bent low over the pallid face and closed eyes of the being who reclined upon the lounge—danger, life, death, everything were for a moment—an instant—forgotten by Capt. W as he peered down into the face—it might be the cold clay—of his long loved and lost Jennie. Probably he could not have recognized the features, but she had around her neck the little chain fastened with the same little heart clasp that he had placed there six years before. He perceived that her heart still beat, and raising her quickly yet tenderly in his arms, he rushed out of the chamber into the nursery and to the window through which he had entered.

Taking Jennie around her waist he eased her down upon his hip, supported her helpless, fainting frame entirely with his right arm, leaving his left hand with which to hold to the ladder as he descended, he placed himself in the window with one foot upon the ladder.—The thrilling pangs of joy and dread, doubt and hope that darted in lightning shocks through the earnest, determined heart of Castine as her eyes fell upon the two beloved objects at the window, with the fire roaring and cracking beneath them and around them, the world will never know, and could not half realize or appreciate were it told. There are sensations of the human heart that can by no human means ever be revealed to men's common understanding. They may be electrically transferred from heart to heart, but they die, come forth still born, whenever we undertake to bring them into this vulgar world. Such were the spirit phantoms that held riot in Castine's bosom as she gazed up at Capt. Waterfield and the form of her sister whom she had mourned as dead, and it was the same electrical feelings that thrilled all hearts of the vast crowd of spectators and rent the air with a loud spontaneous shout.

Capt. Waterfield knew his danger and appreciated his responsibility. He apprehended that the ladder had been

charred and weakened by the fire that so repeatedly enveloped it. He tried it with his foot—bore down cautiously and shook it, and with a terrible crash it parted in twain and fell upon the pavement.

“Great God! have mercy and help them,” exclaimed a thousand voices, but Castine’s dauntless nature rose with the tide of danger as it swelled higher and higher around her, and she said :

“Leave me, Patrick, and run for your life and hurry them up with that other ladder.”

A little time only elapsed—but the terrible suspense made it seem like a year—and another ladder was put in position at Capt. Waterfield’s feet. Grasping his charge stronger he leaped upon the ladder and down through the flames that seemed wild with their thirst for blood, he descended to the ground and laid poor fainting Jennie into the arms of Castine.

Restoratives were applied, and Jennie was sufficiently revived for her friends to know that she still lived but not enough to arouse her from the painful stupor into which the consuming fever of excitement had thrown her; she was unconscious of surrounding circumstances and took no notice or recognition of her friends. A carriage was obtained and she was taken, accompanied by Castine, Capt. Waterfield and Patrick, to Castine’s room at the St. Nicholas hotel.

CHAPTER V.

In accordance with the directions of a physician who had been called to Jennie she was placed quietly and tenderly in bed in Castine's chamber. She lived and was awake, but her eyes shone with an unnatural glare—she stared wildly at everything and at nothing—knew everybody and yet recognized no one aright. She required quietude and rest. Fortunately she soon fell to sleep.

Alas! the rose had faded from her cheeks, her lips were thin and pale and her sunken eyes looked much like they had been the fountain of many bitter tears. The bright sunshine of life had fled and given place to the wan-worn spirit of unrest. Her sharpened features told a truthful tale of her heart-sorrow, and yet she was beautiful—a halo of unearthly sweetness rested upon her countenance.

Castine, Capt. Waterfield and Patrick watched anxiously by her side while she slept. It was a life-giving, refreshing sleep. About three in the morning she awoke. Opening her heavenly eyes she asked:

“Where am I?”

Castine leaned over and imprinted a kiss upon her brow and said:

“Among friends, my dear sister.”

“Sister!” cried Jennie, “who calls me sister? Am I dead and in Heaven at last? Where are my long lost loved ones—my child—my sister, Castine, and—and—but I have not called his name in so long a time I fear to call it even here—William?”

“William and Castine are with you, Jennie—your child, I suppose, is in Heaven; you are still upon earth.”

“Castine! William! here with me!” said Jennie, “Great God how I thank Thee—my prayers are answered—take me now to Thyself and my child.”

Thus they met. It would be mockery for pen or tongue to attempt to describe the meeting of these three people that here took place—it was a scene in which only *souls* filled the *caste*—and humanity is dumb.

Ten days more and the whole party—Castine, Jennie, Capt. Waterfield and Patrick—left New York and started on a perilous trip to the South.

Without following them through Philadelphia, Baltimore, over the Potomac and elsewhere, suffice it they reached Richmond in seven days after leaving New York. Taking temporary quarters at the Spotswood hotel upon their arrival, it was but a proper courtesy from Capt. W. to offer to accompany Jennie the next day to the Libby Prison where her husband, Capt. Lester, was probably confined, and it was an offer that could not be declined.

Although Capt. Waterfield and Jennie had now been almost constantly in each other's company for seventeen days not a word of love or allusion to past life—except a broken sentence or two that were uttered under the wild impulse of their first recognition—had passed between them.

It was evening. They were alone in the parlor. Patrick had gone to the theatre; Castine had retired early. Must the heart never speak? Was it wrong? Let us see:

“Jennie,” said Capt. Waterfield, “(let me call you by that dear old name,) it must have utterance, or it will kill me. Could my heart unfold itself to you with the same unrestrained freedom that the rose unfolds itself to the balmy air of spring time and sunshine of summer, you would then learn and appreciate how much more than impossible it is for my feeble tongue to speak what my burning spirit feels—how weak would be the strongest terms

of which our language will admit in attempting to paint even the most vague outline of the picture of love—*impassioned devotion*—upon which I have dwelt—upon which I have lived from year to year, from day to day and from hour to hour since last I saw you—how my spirit has truly and constantly yearned to commune with your warm life-giving soul—how my whole being has reached forth over space and time and supervening obstacles to blend itself with yours—how I have wished for you while awake and sighed to pillow my thought-weary brow upon your breast—how I have dreamed of you while asleep and in visions of rapturous joy folded you body and soul close to my idolizing heart—how my Will has said to my Heart, “love this being less,” and how my Heart has as often impulsively and defiantly replied, “I *will* love her—God has framed my existence of love and created this beautiful being for me to love—I *will* love her even if, in the ardor of that love, I consume and make desolate all my gilded pleasures beside; this is *real* pleasure—my soul leaps and bounds with youthful vigor in its enjoyment and would freeze into deathly dotage without it—and I *will* love her——”

“But our hearts,” interrupted Jennie, “must be kept under strict guard and subjugated. Perhaps my heart would say, go on—it is sweet to listen at this tale of love that brings back the happy evenings and long shady walks and arbors of Mirkland Lawn. But fate says—and I am its obedient servant—not now; perhaps never this side of Heaven—my ears *must* be deaf—your lips should be dumb.”

“Your will shall be my pleasure, my dear friend. Forgive my impulsive heart—it shall sin no more.”

“Let us talk no more of this subject, Captain—let us talk less and pray more. Good-night.”

And she was gone. Capt. Waterfield soliloquized: Are all the flowers of my soul, even the feeble bloom of feel-

ings fold, whose death I know comes with the first breeze that kisses its opening petals, to be nipped in the bud!— Well, well. I will suffer and be strong.

CHAPTER VI.

The morrow came, and after a pleasant breakfast at nine the whole party set out for the Libby. It was reached and admission gained. Patrick went forward and enquired as directed for Capt. Lester. Finding the man who answered to that name, he informed him that visitors desired to see him.

“Who are they?” enquired the prisoner.

“Yer wife, her sister (Patrick had, before leaving New York, been made acquainted with Castine’s true history and character) and Capt’n Waterfield.”

“Captain Waterfield!” said Capt. Lester, with emphasis.

“Yees, sir,” said Patrick.

“Capt. *William* Waterfield?”

“Yees, sir.”

“Wait a moment;” and Capt. L. reached down into a little box that was concealed under his pillow and took therefrom something which he conveyed to his breast pocket so quickly that Patrick could not see what it was:

"Now tell them that I will see them," said the prisoner, as a furious scowl seemed to pass over his face.

Patrick returned and informed them accordingly. They approached. The meeting between Mrs. Lester and her husband was painfully cold and formal; Waterfield and Castine and Patrick were introduced. He cast a vulturous eye at Waterfield and gazed at Castine with a quizical look which seemed to ask, "are you the little devil that would have killed, instead of captured, me?"

Waterfield and Patrick wandered off as though they wished to examine the prison quarters, but in fact that they might not overhear any private conversation that might pass between the prisoner and his wife. Castine remained near her sister. Many things were briefly spoken of. Jennie related the destruction of their house by fire, and alluded to her own narrow escape.

"Who was the heroic knight that saved you?" inquired Lester.

"Capt. Waterfield," she replied.

"William Waterfield!" said he bitterly.

"The same."

"What business had he at my house at that hour of night," he demanded furiously.

"I knew not that he was in this world—much less in New York—until after the fire—I did not know who rescued me from the flames, and should never have known had I not been told afterwards. Your rude insinuation is unkind, Mr. Lester," said she bursting into tears.

"Then *that* is kind," said he, suddenly striking a powerful blow at her heart with a huge knife. The blood streamed and she fell fainting or dead to the ground.

Castine was not unprepared; the little dagger that she had worn so long about her person over weary marches and in prison had not been forgotten, and she had seen blood before—she was not dashed by its sight. Quick as thought she drew the burnished weapon from its hiding

place and with a well aimed blow, as he expected it not, she dipped its point in the mean, hot blood of Capt. Lester's heart, saying:

"And that is *kinder* still—I bless the world with one villian less."

Lester fell, without a groan, dead at her feet.

Seeing the prisoners running towards the place Capt. Waterfield and Patrick hastily returned. The two bodies lay upon the ground—Jennie was not dead. She was conveyed back to the hotel—a surgeon was called and her wound, though a frightful gash in her left breast, was pronounced not dangerous.

Castine, accompanied by Patrick and an officer of the guard, the latter of whom had observed all that had transpired, was immediately taken before an officer of the law. Here she was detained but a few minutes, was released from custody and complimented by all tongues for the heroism she had displayed and the quick vengeance she had visited upon the fiend, Lester.

* * * * *

The wheel of time rolls on and one year more has dropped over into the waste-ocean of the past.

Patrick has long since rejoined his command and is doing noble duty for his "country."

The wound in Jennie's breast has gotten well—the one in her heart has healed, and she is at last the bright, happy bride of William Waterfield.

The grand old trees of Mirkland Lawn are gone—the old mansion has been removed—the place has passed into strange hands; but one mile east of it and adjoining the same plantation lies a little farm upon which stands a cozy cottage embowered amid elms and ively. It is the place that was given Castine by her uncle—its gardens and walks and shades have been laid out like the old home-place, and its happy inmates are Capt. Waterfield and his pensively sweet bride and CASTINE, THE MAID OF MIRKLAND.

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